

either lying closed or are working much below their capacity:

(b) the estimated loss of foreign exchange as a result of the closure of these mills and the number of workers rendered unemployed;

(c) whether the Government of West Bengal has time and again requested the Union Government for the take-over of these mills; and

(d) if so, how the Government propose to tackle this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) and (b) The details of the jute mills in West Bengal that were lying closed, as on 30th June, 1991 are given below:

Sl. No.	Name of Mill	No. of Workers	Date of Closure
1	Nudda	4,000	2-6-88
2	Budge Budge	2,400	18-3-88
3	Agarpara	3,400	13-6-91
4	Anglo India	5,500	20-5-91
5	Prem Chand	900	17-10-90
Total		17,200	

Some jute mills like Bharat, Calcutta, Gourepore and Tirupati Jute Mills are working far below their rated capacity.

It is not possible to estimate the loss of foreign exchange as a result of closure of these mills.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Government are of the view that take-over/nationalisation is no solution to the problem of sickness and Government will not, as a rule, intervene in such cases. Government have taken several measures for the revival of sick mills including creation of Jute Modernisation Fund to cater to the modernisation requirements of the jute industry, establishment of Special Jute Development Fund for restructuring the jute economy, enactment of mandatory use of jute packing for foodgrains,

sugar, cement and urea, grant of financial support for R&D activities and product diversification programmes, regular purchase of B. T will bags on cost plus basis, encouragement of diversification by providing facilities of excise exemption, concessional import duty, marketing support etc. Government have also set up a Board for Industrial & Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) to determine and enforce remedial, preventive and ameliorative steps for the revival of sick industrial companies.

Taxi Fare Hike

*115. SHRI UDAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news—item captioned 'Arbitrary pre-paid taxi

fare hike alleged' appearing in the Indian Express dated June 27, 1991; and

(b) if so, the corrective measures being taken for the convenience of the passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The corrective measures being taken for the convenience of the passengers are :—

- (i) The fare charges are displayed at prominent places near the booths;
- (ii) Prompt action is taken against any complaint received;
- (iii) To ensure accuracy and reliability, the system is now being computerised;
- (iv) The Delhi Police are dropping the Zone system and the system of colony distance is being introduced;
- (v) The pre-paid booths are being equipped with :
 - (a) Public announcements system;
 - (b) TV with teletext facility.
- (vi) All pre-paid booths are proposed to be linked with MTNL net-work to ensure payment of voucher issued at one booth at any other booth in the city.

Suspension of Voluntary Retirement Scheme by S.T.C.

***116. SHRI LOKANATH CHAUDHURY :** Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation has decided to suspend the voluntary retirement scheme and to retrench the surplus staff;

(b) whether any assessment has been made of the surplus staff at the level of officers and staff; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) STC has temporarily suspended the Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

(b) and (c) STC has commissioned the National Productivity Council to conduct a study to identify the extent and nature of surplus staff.

[Translation]

Disbursement of Loans for Purchase of essential Commodities

***117. SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA :** Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of loans advanced by the public sector banks and other public financial institutions for the purchase of various essential commodities during the last three years and the estimated amount proposed to be advanced during the current year;

(b) whether there is any proposal to discontinue the advancing of loans